

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7969

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 5011

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PO, OVIP

SUBJ: POSSIBLE VISIT BY SECRETARY TO LISBON

REF: (A) LISBON 4809, (B) LISBON 4942

1. ACTING CHIEF OF PROTOCOL TODAY INFORMED ME THAT POSSIBLE VISIT BY SECRETARY HAD BEEN CONSIDERED BY GOP WHICH WAS "KEEN" ON HAVING VISIT BUT COULD NOT HANDLE IT BY AUGUST 4. AUGUST 4 AND 5 WOULD BE "TOO MUCH IN THE BEGINNING" OF THE GOVERNMENT'S TERM. GOP WAS NOT YET POLITICALLY PREPARED TO COPE WITH SUCH AN IMPORTANT VISIT, MUCH AS IT MIGHT DESIRE TO HAVE IT TAKE PLACE.

2. WHEN I PUSHED CHIEF OF PROTOCOL FOR FURTHER PARTICULARS HE CONFINED HIMSELF TO OBSERVING THAT GOP POSITION WAS A DEFINITIVE ONE. HE EMPHASIZED HOWEVER THE HOPE THAT VISIT COULD TAKE PLACE AT A MORE APPROPRIATE TIME, SUCH AS BEGINNING OF SEPTEMBER.

3. COMMENT: AS DEPARTMENT AWARE TIME FRAME FOR GOVERNMENT INSTALLATION DISCUSSED REF (A) HAS SLIPPED. SOCIALISTS WILL PRESENT THEIR PROGRAM LATTER PART OF THIS WEEK RATHER THAN RIGHT AFTER NOMINATION AS WE HAD HOPED. MOST LIKELY DATE FOR GOVERNMENT PROGRAM - AND THEREFORE GOVERNMENT ITSELF - TO BE APPROVED WOULD BE AUGUST 6 (REF B). THUS VISIT WOULD BE SEEN AS POLITICAL ENDORSEMENT BY U.S. PRIOR TO ACCEPTANCE BY ASSEMBLY. VIEWED IN THIS LIGHT GOP
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DESIRES TO HAVE VISIT POSTPONED ARE UNDERSTANDABLE.

WHEN I TALKED WITH THEM TEN DAYS AGO BOTH SOARES AND MEDEIROS FERREIRA STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF HAVING GOVERNMENT "INSTALLED" BY TIME OF VISIT. WHILE GOVERNMENT IS NOW IN PLACE IT CANNOT BE CONSIDERED TO BE INSTALLED UNTIL ITS PROGRAM IS APPROVED.

4. I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT GOVERNMENT'S POSITION IS BASED TOTALLY ON ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS AND IN NO WAY REFLECTS ANY HESITANCY ABOUT THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH USG. I HOPE DEPARTMENT WILL BE ABLE TO KEEP OPEN FUTURE POSSIBILITIES AND PROVIDE ME WITH ALTERNATIVE DATES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
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